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Sermon from 1 Tim. 5, 4.

(For young people.)

It has been said, and with a good deal of reason, that the child is the father of the man. That is to say, any grown person, man or woman, is the product of early influences. Our later years with their joys or sorrows, their successes or failures, their gains or losses, are the unfolding of germs that were implanted in us in our earlier years, just as the fruit of autumn is the final form of what in spring was a bud and in summer a flower. Solomon says: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart therefrom." This rule of Scripture, handed down by the Holy Spirit out of God's infinite wisdom, has been quite generally accepted also by enlightened reason. Those whose business it is to train the coming generation of men have started out from this belief that the good parts and qualities which are to show in a person upwards of the age of twenty-five must be engrafted and nurtured in the years before that time. There may be in a person's later life sudden reverses, due to a peculiar guidance of divine Providence or to the good and evil influences of men: well-trained youths may in the end turn out worthless adults, and ill-raised youths may turn out good men in their riper years. But these are exceptions and cannot invalidate the rule. Whenever we meet with such a case, we express either a glad or a sad surprise, as the case may be. But where a person's development proceeds in the natural way we expect a good finish only from a good start, and we predict that ruin will attend folly, even as we expect good fruit only from a good tree, and vice versa.

Those of us who are somewhat advanced in years look back upon the spent part of our lives and, in many instances, trace our present standing among our fellowmen to certain conditions under which we grew up. We may, on the one hand, be congratulating ourselves because our lot in youth was cast for us in circumstances most

propitious for body and soul, and, on the other hand, we may be deploring that we had not the same opportunities in our younger days as others had, or did not make use of them, failing to heed advice. We are now feeling the effects of past causes: obstacles which we failed to overcome in the past now prove clogs to our progress, while our former discipline renders our present tasks easy.

In view of this experience, would it not be the part of wisdom for you, my young friends, to be convinced that your future well-being will be in accordance with your present endeavors; that success in later life will not drop into your lap while you idle away and dissipate your present opportunities for securing it with the aid of the Lord, but that you must put forth your best efforts now and make the best use of your young life? We look upon you as part of the hope of our church. We pray that God would grant you to appreciate your opportunities as young Christians. As an aid to this end, permit me to show

HOW GOD VIEWS THE RELATION OF A YOUNG CHRISTIAN TO HIS HOME.

1. *He requires him to show piety at home;*
2. *He requires of him that he requite his parents;*
3. *He encourages him to do these things by pronouncing them good and acceptable before God.*

1.

The words of our text were written to a young pastor, Timothy. They were meant as an instruction from the Lord what Timothy must teach the mothers in his congregation, how they must train the young at home.

Young people before others have reason to thank God because they have a home, and to recognize its value. A home—what is it? Certainly more than “the place where a person eats and sleeps and has his washing done.” That description would apply as well to a hotel or boarding house, yea, even to a penitentiary. My home is where not only my limbs receive creature comforts, but where soul and mind are likewise cherished by persons than whom I have none nearer and dearer to me on earth.

We may count it among the marks of a Christian disposition in a young person when he prizes his home, and we can form a fair estimate of a young person's character by observing the amount of time he spends at home and the manner in which he spends it. The tendency of the worldly-minded youth is ever away from home. Young people are apt to regard home-ties as shackles and to break away from what they consider constraint. They begin to roam the streets, to seek out jolly companions, to loaf and to be idlers. This tendency, if one yields to it, works sad changes. “Evil companions,” says Scripture, “corrupt good manners.” The decent language and

upright conduct learned at the Christian home are exchanged for boisterous and foul talk and a bold bearing. Frankness and truthfulness give way to deceit and guilty cunning. Sullenness takes the place of cheerfulness. Politeness, helpfulness, tenderness disappear, and instead rudeness and selfishness make their appearance. The benign influences of the home are being broken up, and the person is on the point of losing his home, even though he may continue to dwell under the same roof with father, mother, brothers, and sisters.

"There is no place like home," young people before others have reason to say. They are never safer, never employed to better advantage, never more solidly benefited than in that grandest, noblest, and oldest society, which God Himself organized, the family. No club can take its place. Our Christian homes are truly our castles, bulwarks of defense against the foes of our soul's welfare.

Christian home life is characterized by piety. Piety is the consciousness that we are in God's presence. The pious person walks as before Jehovah's eyes. God gives us our earthly home, and He is in that home. God has ordered the work and activity of home life, and He blesses it. Under the tutorship of the home man is taught to know himself; he is made to understand what is sin and how forgiveness of sin is obtained. He is shown the difference between right and wrong. He is told of the Redeemer and the meaning of the cross with the Man of Sorrows upon it. He is cheered and comforted in sorrow. All this, because God is in our homes. His Word is in our homes, He is spoken to and speaks to us at our homes.

The practice of true piety, then, must begin at home. We do not think of reading our Bible on the street-corner, or kneeling in prayer in a tavern, or singing a hymn in a crowd of merrymakers. Nor do we ask advice of sporting men and women when our soul is troubled. But at home we have our quiet place for our Bible, for prayer; there we join with the rest of the family in sacred song. There we discuss, in a frank way, matters that make for the peace of our soul. Piety, which seems so much out of place away from home, appears quite proper and easy at home. And when properly inculcated there, it accompanies us in our walks abroad, and spreads its hallowed influence about us as a safeguard against corruption and pollution.

2.

Serving God is the Christian's paramount duty. Next in order is serving God's first representatives, our father and mother. Therefore God, after enjoining piety, requires of young Christians as their very next duty: "Let them requite their parents."

To requite means rather more than to repay. I repay a known value, a fixed price, giving like for like, but I requite favors that can neither be valued nor simply repaid by favors in return. If a

person has made me a loan of a hundred dollars, I repay him when I return the amount loaned me, but I requite him ever after by the grateful esteem in which I hold him for his friendly succor. It is impossible to reduce to a cash value all that a young person has received from his parents before he becomes self-supporting. Yet it is useful to try to approximate in some manner the outlay of money he has caused. Valuing his lodging and board at fifteen cents a day, he would be in debt 1100 dollars on his twentieth birthday. A small amount for the two items mentioned has been chosen merely as a basis for computation. How many additional expenses has he caused! etc. Now, supposing even that there are instances where a young person can make substantial returns to his parents for the expense which they incurred in his behalf, there was something bestowed together with the expense that cannot be repaid in coin: the love, devotion, patience, watchful care and self-sacrifice which have prompted and characterized the parents' attentions to their child. These things are not merchandise, though they are grand and noble realities, and their market value cannot be quoted, for they are never sold, but lovingly given. These things, if properly considered, must place any young person under an abiding obligation to father and mother.

This obligation is not discharged in cold cash, but in childlike reverence and esteem, in dutiful obedience and filial affection. And with the holy apostle I should set this up as the second mark of a Christian disposition in a young person, that he seeks to return to his parents the favors shown him. A young person's character may be fairly well gauged by the manner in which he treats his parents. The tendency of worldly-minded youths has always been to depreciate the blessing of a father's and mother's love and to belittle the authority of parents. They act as if they had outgrown father and mother in wisdom and experience; they set up their own judgment as superior to that of their parents; they take advice and direction from anybody rather than from them; they refer to them in disrespectful terms; they treat their parents' words of warning with contempt or with open resistance. It is not a pleasant matter to contemplate the end of such a course. No person has ever made a success in this world by despising authorities and maltreating his benefactors. The first authority which a person must respect is that which meets him at home. Obedience and submission is here rendered easy, because parental authority is lovingly exercised. If a person has not learned how to obey and to be grateful before he becomes of age, he will have a sorry future before him. For wherever he turns his steps he will meet authorities and will be made to bow his stiff neck and to be humble before his superiors. But others will not teach him this lesson in as gentle and forbearing a manner as his parents.

Young people must keep out of their hearts any thought that would belittle their parents. Father and mother must have in our hearts the place next to God. God Himself enjoins: "*Honor thy father and thy mother.*" And though a son or daughter has risen higher and advanced further in what gives a person a so-called social standing, though the parents are homely folks and the children have become highly cultured, though the parents have their weaknesses and faults, there is no quicker or more effectual way for a son or daughter to thoroughly disgrace himself in the eyes of every righteous person than by showing haughtiness toward his parents on that account. Yea, if the son had become a king and the daughter a queen, while the parents are still humble laborers, before father and mother they are simply John or Mary, simply children who look up to father and mother as the source whence, under God, came all that they are or will be. In such a spirit a young person will find many ways to requite the love that has attended him from his cradle onward. He will deem it a sweet privilege to become the staff and comfort of his aged parents, and the devotion which he renders them will be a wreath of glory on his youthful head.

3.

"For," says Paul, "this is good and acceptable before God." God not only enjoins piety at home and requiting parents as duties, but he also notes with keen attention how these duties are being executed. He marks the young people who walk in these paths and pronounces their conduct acceptable. He is pleased with them; He says: "Well done, young man! Well done, young woman!" This divine approval is a great reward. If I am assured that my conduct gives satisfaction to my heavenly Lord, I have a good conscience and a strong force within me to uphold me against the scorn and ridicule of people who have no understanding of these matters and are unwilling to obey the Fourth Commandment. Let them call me ninny or mother's son or stay-at-home, I can afford to despise them all, when I know God is well pleased with me. I will stake all the favors the world can bestow against one glance of approval from my Father in heaven and my dear Savior.

What is good and acceptable before God will find the approval also of good men. The better part of mankind have at all times looked with favor upon youthful piety and filial love. The young people who have excelled in these virtues have been marked by the community in which they lived, and it has not been to their disadvantage that their fellowmen thought well of them. They have been recommended as young people who can be trusted to give a good account of themselves. Such young people are always in demand. Every business, profession, or calling desires them, and they are at a premium over their inferior comrades. Thus godliness

proves profitable also in a worldly way: it has the promise both of the future and the present life.

The homes of a country make that country what it is. Our country is our home in a wider sense. The welfare of a nation rests on a very small pillar, and that pillar is the family, the home. From the home issue the future citizens, mechanics, doctors, lawyers, etc. A pious, well-ordered home life represents to a nation a magazine stored with energy for every good work. A lover of his home is by that same token also a lover of his country, a true patriot, and the esteem and confidence of a nation welcome him.

Our homes here are temporary. Even though we have the title and deed for them, we are merely renters. Some day we expect to move out into an upper mansion, beyond the clouds. There is our true home, because there is our true Father. This home was reared for us by Christ, our Redeemer. He brings us thither, if we believe in what He has done for us, and obey His words. While we are still in our lower home, let us trim our lights; let us order our young lives after the pattern of the early piety of our Lord. Let us adorn our earthly homes with youthful piety, obedience, love, and esteem of our parents. Amen.

Sermon on 1 Cor. 11, 28.

BELOVED IN CHRIST:—

Self-examination is one of the chief duties of man. The unexamined life is not worth living; therefore every rational member of the human family should make a frequent examination into his state of heart, his conduct in life, and the motives of all his acts. Self-examination is preeminently a duty of the Christian. True Christianity cannot exist without it. Accordingly, St. Paul writes to the Corinthian Christians: "Examine yourselves whether ye be in faith; prove your own selves." Self-examination is particularly a requisite in a Christian communicant. No one should venture to approach the Lord's table, unless he have examined himself; for the apostle of the Lord writes to the Corinthians: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." Let us consider with the aid of the Holy Spirit,

HOW WE SHOULD EXAMINE OURSELVES BEFORE WE APPROACH THE LORD'S TABLE.

We should examine,

1. *Whether we repent of our sins;*
2. *Whether we have true faith in Christ;*
3. *Whether we have the earnest purpose to mend our lives.*

1.

By self-examination before eating and drinking at the Lord's table we aim to ascertain whether we are worthy communicants. Now we learn from the words of institution that only such as have faith in the promises of Christ are worthy, and well prepared to receive the body and blood of Christ; and as the Bible teaches that faith cannot be found but in the hearts of penitent sinners, it is evident that self-examination must begin with the questions: Do I acknowledge that I am a sinner, a lost and condemned sinner? Am I sincerely penitent or sorrowful on account of my transgressions? These questions must be considered and answered in the full persuasion and consciousness that God, the omnipresent and omniscient Judge, is the invisible witness at our self-trial; and the holy Law of God must be used as the standard by which our thoughts, words, and deeds are to be judged.

Let us, therefore, answer these questions in the presence of God: Do we acknowledge that we are poor, miserable sinners? Do we admit that we have transgressed every commandment of God's Law, and that we are worthy of everlasting punishment? Or do we flatter ourselves that we are not so sinful as others? Do we try to evade the verdict and curse of the Law by comparing our good works with the scandalous lives of our fellow-men, and soothing our consciences with the finding in our favor? Do we try to make ourselves believe that God is searching the heart of our neighbor, when He solemnly addresses us, saying: "Thou shalt not! Thou shalt!"? Do we fear, love, and trust in God above all things? Do we never fear the opinion of men and the verdict of society, and obey these rather than God? Have we never set our heart's affections upon gold and silver, the comforts and pleasures of life, and other things that ought not to be our heart's desires? Have we never put our trust in friends and their promises, in our own strength and understanding, instead of trusting in God only? Do we never use the name of God frivolously and in vain? Do we never neglect to pray, to praise and thank God for His grace and mercy? Have we always gladly heard and learned the Word of God? Have we never preferred a good Sunday dinner or the company of friends to the delights of public worship?—Have we loved our neighbor as ourselves? Have we never omitted and neglected to respect, to honor, to help, to comfort, to support, to encourage, to protect, to defend him, to be of service to him in word and deed, and to hope and believe that his motives in all his dealings with us were sincere? Did we honestly tell him his fault between ourselves and him alone whenever we were aware of his sin and danger?—These questions, suggested by the Law of God, will lead to thorough self-trial, and call forth from every upright heart the honest

confession: I am a most miserable sinner and have unquestionably deserved the wrath and punishment of God.

We must not, however, content ourselves with this beginning of self-examination. The real test and search of the heart is made by such inquiries as these: Do we feel our sins as a burden? Are they a source of sorrow and contrition to us, or do we make light of them, as if they were trivial mistakes and frailties of no consequence? And if we are sorry and lament and deplore our transgressions, is it because God has been offended by them, or merely because we have to suffer disease and pain, shame and loss, fear and death in consequence of our iniquities? If we are constrained to answer these questions with the confession: We are sincerely sorry for having grieved our Father in heaven by our sins,—then, only then have we satisfactorily examined our hearts according to the Law.

2.

We ask, in the second place, whether we have true faith in Christ.

The mere knowledge of the Gospel is not true faith. Such knowledge, however, may be the beginning of faith and lead to the full and blessed knowledge of Christ. The knowledge of the Gospel-narratives must not be undervalued. It is most certainly needful to find an answer to such questions as these: Did Jesus of Nazareth come into the world only to teach sinners by word and example, or was His mission of a higher nature? Was He a mere man, the ideal man, the most perfect of God's creatures, or was He more? Surely, such questions are important. Faith in Christ is anything but true, genuine, saving faith, if it is not based on the fundamental truths of the Gospel, that Jesus Christ is God and man, not merely a teacher, the founder of a religion, the pattern of the ideal life, and the like, but *the Prophet, the Priest, the King, the only Redeemer of mankind*, who purchased and bought the world of sinners from the thralldom of death and the devil by the payment of His holy, innocent blood. This knowledge of the substitutional work of Christ, the God-man, this knowledge of the vicarious atonement is as necessary to faith as bread and water are to life and health.

But let us remember, faith is more than such knowledge. Many a hypocrite has repeated the words of the Second Article of our faith, but the getting of this confession by heart is not equivalent to believing it in and with the heart. The searching questions of self-examination according to the Gospel must, therefore, be these: Do we believe that Jesus Christ died for *our* sins, and that He was raised again for *our* justification? Do we trust in Jesus and His work as cheerfully and confidently as the insolvent debtor accepts the receipt from his friend who paid the last penny of his debt? Do we believe, in full assurance and without doubt, that God forgives our sins and

opens to us the door of heaven as often as we hear the Gospel and the voice of absolution? Do we believe the words of Christ: "Given and shed *for you* for the remission of your sins"? If such is our faith, our unfaltering trust, we may conclude this part of our self-examination, rejoicing: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases;" and: "In Christ we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Jesus' blood and righteousness *my* jewels are, *my* glorious dress.

3.

Our self-examination will be more thorough and salutary, if we finally ask, whether we have the sincere purpose to mend our lives.

Sincere sorrow for sin and true faith in Christ cannot be coupled with the purpose of continuing in sin. There are many, it is true, who would gladly follow Christ if He were willing to forgive their sins and, at the same time, allowed them to serve sin and lead a life according to the desires of their flesh. There are those, too, in the visible church, professing the Christian faith, who imagine to be true believers, though they continue to curse and swear, to despise their parents, to harm their neighbor, to live in adultery, to defraud, to slander, and the like. But they are deceiving themselves. The thief, the adulterer, the false witness must not only repent of having committed sin, but manifest the sincerity of their repentance by hating and avoiding their bosom-sins. The thief, for instance, must make amends and restitution and steal no more; the adulterer must take back his divorced spouse and lead a chaste life; the false witness must confess his sin and clear the innocent neighbor who is suffering the consequences of the falsehood. In short, the sincerity of penitence is manifested in the earnest endeavor not to "do that great wickedness" again.

Let this be a part, and not the least part, of our self-examination. Let us ask: Do we hate and shun the sins committed against God's Law, and now graciously forgiven for Christ's sake? Do we never leave the mercy-seat to go back into the old paths of unrighteousness? Is it our sincere prayer that the Holy Spirit would grant us a new measure of strength and love and holy desires and godly zeal to hate the former iniquities and to become more perfect in godliness?

God is reading the answer to these questions in our inmost hearts. May He find us sincere in sorrow, sincere in faith, and sincere in the purpose to amend our lives. May we all be found sincere at all times, until we pass from self-examination before the invisible Judge to the perfect trial on the day of final doom! Amen. TH. SCH.

Rededication Sermon.

Ps. 118, 23—25.

IN JESUS CHRIST DEARLY BELOVED FRIENDS, ESPECIALLY MY DEAR
CONGREGATION:—

"This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes." These words express our sentiments precisely. These words state exactly what we see and feel. And as we gaze upon the wondrous change that has taken place here since last we met within these walls, and as we think of Him who brought about this change, we join the Psalmist in saying also: "Save now, I beseech Thee, O Lord; O Lord, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity!" The words of our text are certainly very appropriate for the present occasion. They contain

OUR ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND OUR PRAYER ON THE REDEDICATION OF OUR CHURCH.

1. *Our acknowledgment: This is the Lord's doing.*
2. *Our prayer: Save now, send now prosperity!*

1.

A year ago to-day, my brethren, we were gathered together here in large numbers. We were celebrating the tenth anniversary of the organization of our congregation. Our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. We exclaimed: "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." For ten long years the Lord had come to us here in His Word and Sacrament. For ten long years He had instructed, exhorted, warned, cheered, and comforted us. During those ten years He had *increased* our church and Sunday school, and had *decreased* our debt! Ah! we had reason, good reason, to rejoice and to be exceeding glad. We had reason, good reason, to cry out: "The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." Oh! that was a day of joy, a day of gladness, that 9th day of March, 1902. The future looked rosy; and the prospects, bright.

A few months rolled by. The 20th of July dawned. We were gathered together here as usual to hear the Word of God. Hardly was our worship over when lowering clouds appeared on the horizon and began to chase each other across a murky sky. The wind began to blow at a terrific rate. Trees were uprooted, houses unroofed, windows broken, signs blown down, awnings torn to shreds. Suddenly a tremendous crash was heard, and the rear part of our beautiful church was a mass of ruins. The sight beggared description. Tears filled our eyes. Our fondest hopes were blasted in a moment. With the help of a loan we had just paid off our mortgage. We were beginning to see light in our darkness. Never before in the history of our congregation had we been in as good a financial condition.

And now the rear wall of our church was blown away, our pipe organ was smashed to pieces, and a new debt of about \$3000.00 was staring us in the face. We were stunned; we were bewildered; we were bowed down to the dust. But we said with the Psalmist in our text: "This is the Lord's doing." Did not His Word tell us: "The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet"? Did not the prophet write: "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it"? Did not Jesus say that not a sparrow can fall to the ground, yea, not a hair of our head can perish, without His permission? How, then, could a church, a house of His abode, be ruined without His will? Moreover, we were reminded of the words:

God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform:
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning Providence
He hides a smiling face.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take:
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
In blessings on your head.

We remembered:

What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear.
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!

We lifted up our eyes unto the hills from whence cometh our help, and our help came from the Lord which made heaven and earth.

The first thing the Lord sent us was brotherly sympathy. From the Golden Gate of California to the rugged hills of Maine, from the sunny strands of the gulf to the icy regions of Canada, yea, even beyond the great Atlantic—in faraway Germany—sympathetic hearts beat for us when they heard of our loss. Letters of sympathy and encouragement poured into our parsonage by the hundreds. That was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. Those letters told us:

Better to hope though the clouds hang low,
And to keep the eyes still lifted:
For the sweet blue sky will soon peep through
When the ominous clouds are rifted.
There was never a night without a day,
Nor an evening without a morning,
And the darkest hour, as the proverb goes,
Is the hour before the dawning.

The next thing the Lord sent us was financial aid. He raised up for us friends who came to our rescue. Collections were lifted, coin cards were filled, and checks upon checks were sent, so that we were enabled to rebuild and repair and improve our church. My brethren! that was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. True, we sent out an appeal, but who was it that gave us the wisdom to choose the right words in that appeal? and who was it that opened the hearts and hands of many to answer that appeal? Yea, who made our own hearts willing to make an extra effort to give for the rebuilding of our ruined church? Ah! that was not our doing. It was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

And what must we say as to the manner in which we have repaired and rebuilt our church? When, in our first meeting after that awful storm, we resolved to close up the rear wall, none of us even dreamt of erecting this spacious chancel and these majestic arches. But the Lord had intended it otherwise. In His allwise Providence He so ordered it that our church looks to-day as it does. This, too, is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

On that never-to-be-forgotten 20th day of July we asked, Why has the Lord done this? And we found the answer in His Word. There we read: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Again: "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." My brethren, do we know now why God did what He did? Ah! indeed we do. Our church needed repairing sorely from roof to basement, but how could we repair it burdened as we were? Now the Lord has done it for us. He wanted us to have a better organ and a more beautiful church.

And what is the lesson, the great lesson, that we learn from this? The lesson is:

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged,—
Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend as faithful,
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness,—
Take it to the Lord in prayer.

The lesson is: "All things work together for good to them that love God." The lesson is: "Cast all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." The lesson is: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." The lesson is: "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven

is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him." The lesson is: "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies."

See, my brethren, "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes." This is our acknowledgment to-day on the rededication of our church. And what is our prayer?

2.

The Psalmist having acknowledged: "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it," prayed: "Save now, I beseech Thee, O Lord!" The Psalmist prayed for the salvation of his soul. So should we. This should be also our prayer: "Save now, I beseech Thee, O Lord!" My brethren! we have rebuilt and rededicated this house as a house of salvation. Here the salvation of Jesus Christ shall be offered to poor, lost, and condemned sinners. Here they shall learn to know that they are in need of this salvation. Here they shall be taught that they may have this salvation freely, for Christ's sake, through faith. Here shall be proclaimed to them that "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here they shall be directed to Jesus as to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Here they shall be told that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Here they shall be invited in words like these:

Come, ye sinners, one and all,
Come, ye all have invitation;
Come, obey His gracious call,
Come and take His free salvation!
Firmly in these words believe:
"Jesus sinners doth receive!"

Do you hear this, my friend? O believe it, and join the Psalmist in praying: "Save now, I beseech Thee, O Lord." Yes, believe *now* and pray *now*, for "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Hence,

Delay not, delay not, O sinner, draw near,
The waters of life are now flowing for thee,
No price is demanded; the Savior is here;
Redemption is purchased, salvation is free.

Delay not, delay not, O sinner, to come,
For mercy still lingers, and calls thee to-day;
Her voice is not heard in the vale of the tomb;
Her message, unheeded, will soon pass away.

Or was there, perhaps, a time in your life when you did pray to God to save your soul; but have you left your Father's house, have you learned to love the world, have you ceased to pray? If so, I implore you: Return, and pray: "Save now, I beseech Thee, O Lord!" Yes,

Return, O wanderer, return,
And seek an injured Father's face,
Those warm desires that in thee burn
Were kindled by reclaiming grace.

Return, O wanderer, return,
Thy Savior bids thy spirit live;
Go to His bleeding feet, and learn
How freely Jesus can forgive.

O pray: "Save now, I beseech Thee, O Lord! Save me from my sins; save me from Satan, death, and hell; save my soul!"

But, my brethren, we should pray, not only for the salvation of our soul, but also for the prosperity of our church. The Psalmist prayed not only: "Save now, I beseech Thee, O Lord," but also: "O Lord, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity!" We see, it is the Lord who sends prosperity. Though we can and should plant and water, it is the Lord who must give the increase. But, mark well, He would have us ask Him for the increase, He would have us beseech Him to send prosperity.

And wherein does this prosperity consist for which the Psalmist prayed and for which we should pray? Not in wealth, not merely in large numbers, but in true conversions. That church prospers best which has the best Christians. Would we enjoy true prosperity as a church, let us ask God to make us all sincere Christians and to keep us all in the true faith. Yea, let us ask Him to bring many more to the saving knowledge of His dear Son, Jesus Christ, and to increase our membership. But let us never forget that the true prosperity of a church consists not so much in having many members as rather in having good members. It is not quantity, it is quality, that the Lord looks to.

O happy the church whose members have given their hearts to Jesus! Such members will work for the Lord, will labor in His vineyard, and success and prosperity will attend their efforts. God promises that His Word shall not return void, and that our labor in the Lord shall not be in vain. Oh, then, may God grant us this prosperity! May He grant that we, one and all, will pray: "Save now, I beseech Thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity!" And He who has begun the good work will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Only let us persevere in faith and continue in prayer, and not be discouraged and disheartened. Let us rather vow again to be faithful unto death and to cling to Him in

good days and in evil days, in days of sadness and in days of gladness. Yea, let us be Christians in deed and in truth, and prosperity cannot fail us. O

Then come before His presence now,
And banish fear and sadness;
To your Redeemer pay your vow,
And sing with joy and gladness:
Though great distress my soul befell,
The Lord my God did all things well;
To God all praise and glory!

Amen.

O. K.

Outlines for Sermons on the Gospel Lessons.

Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

MARK 7, 31—37.

Cures like the one here recorded serve to prove Christ the Son of God made manifest for the purpose of destroying the works of the devil. — However, there are strange features in this story. The manner in which this invalid was cured differs from cures that were effected by a mere word of command.

THE REMARKABLE CURE OF THE DEAF-MUTE.

1. *The Lord's strange attitude toward the deaf-mute's friends.*

These people, like Naaman and the centurion, assumed to know beforehand the *manner* of the cure which they came to solicit, v. 32. The report of the Savior's acts, particularly those in the country of the Gadarenes, ch. 5, had won for Christ the affections of these people. But as yet their faith was mingled with carnal dross. Fleshly enthusiasm, the desire to exhibit the greatness of their Champion to others, idle curiosity, and like motives contributed to their action. At any rate, their request did not spring from pure, humble faith; for Christ does not only not commend them, as He has done on other occasions, but He does not even permit them to see the cure, v. 33, and forbids them to proclaim it, v. 36.

Christ is always greater than a person's faith. And faith is never more than a beggar in the presence of Christ. Stipulating conditions with our requests is retarding the boon which we ask. Christ yields Himself a servant to faith, however, He never ceases to be the believer's Lord. He hears prayers, but does not heed orders. Believingly praying for help and committing the manner thereof absolutely to the Lord, this is not an easy matter. Our disappointments in prayer are caused by our precocity, conceit, etc.

2. *His strange treatment of the deaf-mute.*

V. 33—35. The peculiar actions of the Lord are intended for the deaf-mute. This is the only way in which the Lord can converse with the unfortunate person. He rivets his attention, points to the two avenues by which God communicates with man and man with God, sighs heavenward, to express the distress He feels over these sad effects of sin, and also to show whence our help cometh, thus preaching, in the sign-language, sin and grace, repentance and faith.

Christ demands faith in those whom He helps. Alien faith had brought this invalid to the Lord; the Lord hastens to give him a faith of his own. Faith is always a personal matter. True faith acknowledges man the cause of his own ruin, and God the cause of His recovery.

Christ still takes His own aside and places His finger upon whatsoever is dead in them. He employs peculiar ways to bring to the knowledge of His saints their misery and His bounty.

3. The remarkable revelation which He makes of His person.

a. He sighed, v. 34. He was painfully agitated. He was a true man, Hebr. 4, 15. In our distresses it is a great comfort to know Him as our fellow in suffering and to be assured of His sympathy, enforced also by the memory of His own tribulations. Our misery is never so deep but Christ is able to touch its level with His compassion. Yea, His sorrows sank Him into deeper affliction than we ever enter. He has no trouble to understand the cry of distress, nor the distressed to reach His ear and heart.

b. The majestic Ephphatha with its marvelous effect exhibits this sighing man of Galilee as the almighty Jehovah, true God. — He can turn our tearful plaint into jubilant rejoicing in the twinkling of an eye by one word of His limitless power. We believe in the lowly Christ, the crucified, yet the mighty God, who has ended all our sorrows.

Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.

LUKE 10, 23—37.

This entire Gospel is a eulogy on the genuine Christian. What the Lord has stated in private to the seventy, and what He has related in public on a later occasion, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, is uniform in aim: it depicts the glory, partly hidden, partly manifest, of a follower of Christ. The believer in his present earthly state is a much afflicted person, and his Church is tossed with every tempest. And yet, his is a favored lot.

BLESSED IS THE TRUE CHRISTIAN.

1. *Because of what he sees and hears.*

The righteousness of the Gospel. Justifying faith.

2. *Because of what he is enabled to do.*

The righteousness of the Law. Sanctifying faith.